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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#)
SUBJECT: KOSOVO: BAD POLL NUMBERS FOR THACI SIGNAL REQUEST
FOR CONTACT GROUP HELP?

REF: PRISTINA 513

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. A new public opinion poll of non-Serb Kosovars suggests plummeting popularity for opposition leaders Hashim Thaci and his Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). The poll, taken by a nominally apolitical local consulting company, was issued days before Thaci made a rare request for a June 9 meeting of Pristina-based Contact Group representatives to discuss a possible postponement of municipal elections tentatively scheduled for October. PDK headquarters denies any connection between the poll numbers and Thaci's reversal of his steadfast opposition to a postponement. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) A June 2 poll of ethnic Albanian and non-Serb ethnic minorities released by a self-identified apolitical local consulting agency suggested a change in fortune for Hashim Thaci's opposition party, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). Released by "Gani Bobi," a local think tank, in cooperation with new local Kumt Consulting, the poll finds 49.8 percent support among non-Serb Kosovars for senior coalition party Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), 21.2 percent for the PDK, 18.1 percent for Ramush Haradinaj's Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and 3.1 percent for Veton Surroi's Reform Party Ora (PRO).

¶3. (SBU) Individual political personalities from the opposition fared much worse than their respective political parties. According to the poll, which assigned a 1-5 ranking to results (5 being the best), Prime Minister Agim Ceku polled highest at 4.18. Thaci, who usually ranks well inside the top ten among Kosovo's politicians, polled a dismal 15th place.

¶4. (SBU) Thaci's political advisor Lirim Grejcevcic told polFSN June 16 that the poll was a "manipulation" orchestrated by Thaci's political rivals in the LDK and AAK, namely Deputy Prime Minister Lutfi Haziri and Ramush Haradinaj, respectively. Grejcevcic claimed that Shkelzen Maliqi, the principal of Gani Bobi, was "bought" and had changed the original numbers. (NOTE: A forthcoming survey

by Index Kosovo supported the drop in public opinion for Thaci's PDK: LDK polled at 42 percent; PDK 21 percent; AAK 11 percent and ORA 3 percent. END NOTE.)

15. (SBU) Deflecting an invitation to comment on reports that Thaci's new-found comfort with a delay in elections stems from these poll results (reftel), Grejcevcic said the PDK was neither influenced nor impressed with the poll's results. "It has no bearing on our political actions. Our idea for a technical government precedes any current poll results."

16. (U) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable for release in its entirety to U.N. Special Envoy for Kosovo Martti Ahtisaari.
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